

## Background:

In 1989, the North Dakota Legislature passed the law authorizing the Department of Human Services to develop, administer, and implement a protective services program for vulnerable adults. The program works to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation and promotes self-care and independence. Each regional human service center has an Elder Services Unit that provides vulnerable adult protective services and other services.

## Legal Definition of Vulnerable Adult:

**... any person older than age 18, or emancipated by marriage who has a substantial mental or functional impairment**

ND Century Code 50-25.2-03 says that any person who reasonably believes that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, may report the information to the N.D. Department of Human Services or to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

The law gives the Department the right to assess and provide or arrange for adult protective services if the vulnerable adult consents to and accepts services. The Department may pursue administrative, legal, or other remedies authorized by law, which are necessary and appropriate under the circumstances to protect a vulnerable adult who cannot give consent, and to prevent further abuse or neglect.

## Did You Know?

Adult children, other relatives, church communities, and others help meet the needs of many people.

**Individuals who receive vulnerable adult protective services often lack informal supports.**

## Federal Fiscal Year Data:

	FFY 08	FFY 07
<b>New cases</b>	486	444
<b>Info &amp; referral calls</b>	360	392
<b>Brief services</b> <i>Take &lt;2 hours to resolve, such as helping a family locate needed services</i>	257	223
<b>Cases closed</b>	468	404
<b>Hours spent on info &amp; referral, brief services, and cases</b>	6,839	7,008

**NOTE:** A new case does not mean a person has not been served before. Recidivism is common. Abilities change over time, and neglect or abuse concerns may resurface. Data should not be compared to data from before 2003-2004 due to a clarification in data.

	FFY 08
<b>Referral Reasons</b>	
Self-neglect	66%
Neglect	17%
Financial exploitation	9%
Abuse	8%
<b>Referral Sources</b>	
Agency	29%
Medical/Home Health	25%
Community	20%
Family	16%
Legal/Judicial	6%
Self	4%
<b>Nature of Request</b>	
Non-emergency	80%
Imminent Danger	10%
Emergency	10%

## OVER:

**Demographic Details**

**How Cases are Handled →**

# Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Demographic Data

Oct. 2007 – Sept. 2008

## General

76%	Age 60 and older
60%	Female
95%	Caucasian
3%	American Indian/Native Alaskan

## Marital Status

69%	Single/Widow/Widower
18%	Married
11%	Divorced
2%	Separated

## Living Arrangements

63%	Live alone
17%	Live with other family member
14%	Live with spouse
6%	Live with non-relatives

## Alzheimer's & Other Dementia

69%	Did not have dementia
31%	Do have some sort of dementia

## Reasons for Case Closure:

15%	Referred to another agency
17%	Received protective arrangements, or died
16%	Client refused services
15%	Placed in long-term care facility
10%	Referred to home & community-based services
27%	Other

## Adult Protection in Practice:

- A **vulnerable adult has the right** to make decisions on his or her own behalf until he or she delegates responsibility voluntarily to another, or the court grants responsibility to another.
- **When interests compete**, a competent individual's decision supersedes community concerns about safety, landlord concerns about property, or family concerns about health or finances.
- **A person can choose** to live "in harm" or even self-destructively, if she or he is competent to choose, does not harm others, and commits no crimes.

## How Are Calls Handled?

When a Regional Human Service Center receives a call about suspected abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, staff members:

- **Assess the situation** via phone to determine if an emergency exists.
- **Work with law enforcement, if appropriate.**
- If it is not an emergency, but requires more than providing information and referral, **staff may conduct a site visit** to assess the situation and assure appropriate services are offered.
- **May offer services** to the vulnerable person such as home-delivered meals, personal care assistance, respite care, or other services, if appropriate.

## Human Service Center Contact Information:

<b>Bismarck</b>	701-328-8888	888-328-2662
<b>Devils Lake</b>	701-665-2200	888-607-8610
<b>Dickinson</b>	701-227-7500	888-227-7525
<b>Fargo</b>	701-298-4500	888-342-4900
<b>Grand Forks</b>	701-795-3000	888-256-6742
<b>Jamestown</b>	701-253-6300	800-260-1310
<b>Minot</b>	701-857-8500	888-470-6968
<b>Williston</b>	701-774-4600	800-231-7724

**Another Resource:**  
**ND Aging and Disability**  
**Resource Link**  
**1-800-451-8693**  
**[www.carechoice.nd.gov](http://www.carechoice.nd.gov)**

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